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On the Roll of Honour



*From a photograph taken at
Ditgate Camp, Shorncliffe, August 1915.*

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On the Roll of Honour

G. L. B. MACKENZIE

LIEUTENANT IN THE 3RD BATTALION

TORONTO REGIMENT

1ST DIVISION, CANADIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

4th JANUARY, 1892—7th JUNE, 1916

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Two passages noted by the subject of this Memoir.

“It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.”—*Lam. iii, 37.*

“We have built a house that is not for Time’s throwing;
We have gained a peace unshaken by pain for ever.”

RUPERT BROOKE.

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THOUSANDS of young lives of good endowment and fair promise have been nobly laid down, or nobly risked, in the present war. If one of these is here made the subject of more than a passing notice, it is not in order to claim special distinction for it, but because we would in this way pay the tribute of love to a dear and precious memory. The preparation of this biographical sketch has been a labour of love and the solace of some hours that would otherwise have been vacant and desolate. It is not doubted that some who knew the subject of the memoir intimately and loved him, will welcome the further insight into his life and thoughts which such a record as this may afford. Beyond this inner circle, there are many persons, as there is now abundant evidence to show, who felt the attraction of a personality in which frankness, modesty and sweetness of disposition were

combined with intelligence and thoughtfulness and a reverence for all that is high, noble and beautiful. To such also it is hoped that this short life-story will not be without interest.

GEORGE LAWRENCE BISSET MACKENZIE was born at "Uplands," Deer Park, on 4th January, 1892. In the ample spaces and good air of what was then an entirely rural suburb of Toronto, he grew in health and vigour, a companionable child, sensitive and rather timid, but not shy, and always very tractable. No doubt, like other children, he sometimes illustrated the wisdom of childhood by quaint remarks. Only one is recorded, when he excused some tears by saying that they were "the juice of the heart," that would not be restrained.

In his eighth year his maternal grandmother and mother died, within a few months of each other. He was deeply attached to both of them and these events had an obviously depressing effect upon the child's mind, manifesting itself in a disinclination for the games and companionship of children of his own age. He quite outgrew this, but, as a boy, he never mixed indiscriminately with his young school-fellows and shewed a preference for the society of older people. With his sister, he gained the rudiments of education under a kind and sympathetic governess. This lady brought them as far as the writing of short essays, on such burning subjects as the "Boer War."

George's first school was an ephemeral institution for very young boys in the northern part of Toronto, under the charge of a lady. As far as we can recall their names, all the little boys who attended this school—Martin Baldwin, Strachan Ince, "Mill" and "Bill" Jarvis, Clarence Rogers, Hal Gordon and George Mackenzie—were afterwards to become soldiers of the Empire in the great war. The four last-named were destined to give their lives to the cause.

In 1902 George entered the preparatory branch of Upper Canada College. His grandfather had been a resident pupil of the College sixty years before. As George had a love for books, a good intelligence and persistent industry, his reports were always excellent, and numerous prizes came his way. He was three years in the "Prep.," two years as a non-resident and one as a boarder. In 1905 he passed into the upper school as a boarder. Amongst the prizes awarded to him at this period were editions of the poetical works of Coleridge, Wordsworth and Tennyson. With the contents of those books he soon made himself familiar. Poetry was always a delight to him and he read all that he could get hold of. It was about this time, also, that he received some deep religious impressions, which remained with him as the basis of his character, and tended to shape his life and conduct. On such subjects, however, as indeed on all matters affecting his innermost feelings, he was habitually reticent.

In the summer of 1906, his father took him, with his sister, for a visit to Europe, which lasted two years. This was a very happy period in the boy's life, as it was also in the life of his

father. The two were constant companions and the most intimate of friends. The things which interested the one interested the other. They walked together and talked together, planned and made excursions, read up the guide-books and histories and together learned what they could of the places visited. The boy's interest in the world-wonders, now unfolded before his eyes, was always keen and unflagging. If he could not find a companion for an excursion, he would go alone, rather than miss anything.

The family settled, after some travel in England, at Weston-super-Mare, where a house was rented. George went on with his studies in Weston, part of the time with a tutor who seemed to know everything and had a talent for imparting knowledge. It was characteristic of this highly-endowed scholar that he devoted such holidays as he took to the study of the Romance languages in the British Museum.

After about a year spent in England, the family crossed to the Continent, passing on to Switzerland after a few days in Paris. Lausanne, Thun, Interlaken, Grindelwald, Muerren, Lucerne and Engelberg were some of the places visited in Switzerland. George evinced a passion for mountain climbing and managed to get some good climbs for a boy. The most ambitious ascent was that of the Titlis, made from Engelberg. In his diary, kept with great regularity and industry, he names twenty-two peaks which, amongst others, were visible from the summit.

Seven months were spent by the travellers in Switzerland. This sojourn was followed by a visit to Nice, and thence to

Italy. All the famous Italian cities were included in the itinerary, and the party sailed from Naples in the White Star steamship *Republic*—soon after sunk in a collision—for New York, arriving at home again in May, 1908.

Shortly afterwards, George entered Upper Canada College for the second time. Desultory as his studies had been, what he might have lost in systematic learning was compensated for by the quickening process which his faculties had undergone through travel. He was able to take his place in the Upper Fifth Form. During this, his last year at the College, he competed for the Harris History Prize, open to the whole school, and succeeded in winning it. His papers were thought by the Headmaster to be sufficiently good to be sent to the faculty of University College, and it was probably on the strength of this that George was afterwards elected a Member of the University Historical Society. Amongst the handsome books awarded to him for the Harris Prize were the nine volumes of Kinglake's "History of the War in the Crimea." This masterpiece of English literary style he read at once with keen delight. In the spring of 1909 he matriculated at University College, Toronto.

No period of the son's life was more interesting to the father than that of which the story now closes, the period extending from 1906 to 1909. The child had passed into boyhood; his mind was expanding; a new world of thought was opening before him. His comely appearance and the composure and frank cordiality of his manner, attracted the notice of strangers and won their favour. He had kindly feelings

and a sense of justice towards all, and these qualities habitually restrained him from disagreeable comments upon other people. He was essentially religious, but neither morbid nor unsociable. He was wont to show a ready deference to his father's wishes and a tender solicitude for his comfort and welfare. How well is recalled the quick shade of pain that would flit over George's face if he thought his father was disquieted in any way, or if his own sensitive nature received a momentary wound! The picture of the growing boy in those days is one that we dwell on with tenderness and profound thankfulness, even though it rises up to memory through a mist of tears.

The course at the University which, after consultation with his father, George adopted, was the General Arts Course. The principal subjects of study were the Greek, Latin and French languages, History and English Literature. At the end of his second year he was awarded the Governor-General's Silver Medal for the highest standing in all subjects during the two years. He was, as has been noted, elected a Member of the Historical Society, consisting of graduates and undergraduates and members of the faculty and senate, interested in historical research. He read one paper, the subject allotted to him being "French Canadians in 1775 and 1812." The paper was, on the suggestion of one of the professors, published in the *Canadian Magazine* in March, 1913. George sums up the result of his investigations into the subject as follows:—

"Much as we are delighted by Mr. Bourassa's eloquence we cannot agree with him about 1775. His compatriots did not play a heroic part on that occasion, but they played a

most natural one. The Dominion does not exist to-day, through the 'remarkable attachment' to England of her new French subjects in 1775, but because there were about 1,000 hard-fighting, hard-dying English regulars behind the guns of Quebec, led by a leader after their own heart.

"When we pass on to the war of 1812, we find a marked contrast between the attitude of the people of Lower Canada then and their attitude in 1775.

"By the end of the 18th century the French-Canadians had experienced forty years of British rule, cleaner and juster than any they had known before. Their natural antipathy to the people of the United States, which had been forgotten in the troubled years after the Quebec Act, had by this time become again firmly rooted, strengthened as it was by the bitter remembrance of American depredations and swindling. Even during Craig's administration, which Garneau paints in the darkest colours as a relentless tyranny, during a time of endless bickering between Executive and Assembly, the peasant was in the main contented; the population had increased to 250,000; stimulated by Napoleon's attempts to cut off Great Britain from the Baltic trade and by the Non-Intercourse Acts of the United States, lumber had become an important industry; roads had been built; the first steamer had been put on the St. Lawrence; the power of the seigniors over their tenants was steadily decreasing, disproving the statement of American emissaries who had made use of the fact of the re-establishment of French civil law by the Quebec Act to conjure up a vision of the revival of the feudal tyranny of the seigniors. In fact the peasant, as long as he did not listen to the demagogues of the Assembly, found nothing to grumble at. The priests were more than anxious to keep the country untouched by the taint of republicanism; the leading French politicians realised that absorption with the United States would put an end to all their dreams of a national individuality under Britain's protection.

“ There is also a noticeable change in 1812 in the attitude of Lower Canada to the Quebec Act. By that date the French Canadians were in fact beginning to look upon the Quebec Act as their ‘ Great Charter.’ The influx of United Empire Loyalists is the significant fact, to which this changed attitude is largely due. Until the immigration of English-speaking people from the south, the French-Canadians had no fear of being swamped and gradually becoming Anglicised. Had it not been for the Quebec Act, there is every reason to suppose that this would have happened. So the Quebec Act had an exactly opposite influence upon the loyalty of the people of Lower Canada in 1812, to that which it had exercised in 1775. It thus happened that on this occasion, ‘ when the United States offered French Canada liberation from the British yoke, welcoming her at the same time to their own arms, she answered with bullets.’ These are the words of Goldwin Smith, but we cannot agree with him in applying them to the invasion of ’75 as well as that of 1812.”

In his last year at College, George wrote for the English Essay Prize, \$150 in money, offered every two years by All Souls College, Oxford, for the best essay on some historical subject. Of two subjects proposed, he chose “ Bolingbroke in the Reign of Anne,” and was awarded the prize. He obtained his Bachelor’s degree, with first-class standing, in the spring of 1913.

His career at the University was now completed and, before settling down to the study of law, which was to be his profession, he made a trip to England with two College friends, one of whom—Maurice Wilkes, of Brantford—was, like George himself, afterwards to lose his life in action in the Great War. George’s long vacations had been spent in camping, canoeing

and sailing on the Georgian Bay, and in Algonquin Park, or Muskoka. He was never happier than when so employed. He became an expert sailor, and a tireless canoeist and walker. At a later date he joined the Argonaut Rowing Club and rowed in some of the club races. Now, in the summer of 1913, he turned with delight to the plan of a walking tour in England and the visit was chiefly devoted to walking. Cornwall and Devonshire were the regions first traversed, and in these counties the pedestrians covered over 200 miles on foot. He seems to have been more keen for this mode of travel than his companions, for he went to the Lake District alone and spent a few days in rambling on foot through this beautiful land. He wrote an account of this holiday for the *Canadian Magazine*. The article was published and he had the satisfaction of pocketing, for the first time, a fee for literary work. From this article we take some extracts, which will show the spirit that the young tourist brought to his wanderings:—

“I had always wanted to visit Cornwall. Years before I had watched, more than once, the Cornish Riviera Express fly through Somersetshire at sixty miles an hour and gone with it in my imagination to the cliffs and breakers beyond. For Cornwall possesses in no common degree the interest attaching to the ultimate. This is part of the indefinable attraction of any sea coast, but Cornwall possesses it in a special measure. Flung boldly far out into the Atlantic, it forms almost as good a riding-boot as Italy, this tapering acute angle of the great triangle which Cæsar described in his despatches as reaching down almost to Spain. The walls of England along this exposed part of her shore are indeed formidable, and the ocean moans

in despair as it dashes against the base of the cliffs in fruitless efforts to undermine and break off bits from the land.

* * * * *

“Although the walker does not voyage in quest of the picturesque, yet he finds it more easily than other travellers. I do not refer to the fact that on foot he can often penetrate into districts so wild as to prevent the approach of any vehicle. This is less generally true in Europe than in the other continents. In this age of daring engineering projects, the tourist can ascend in comfort on a mountain railway to great altitudes and view nature in the wildest aspects. In Britain, motors have climbed to the summits of Snowdon and Ben Nevis. Yet we doubt very much if a man, who has ascended to the top of the Jungfrau on the electric railway, sees as fine a view as he who has reached the same spot by many hours of arduous and dangerous climbing. In the same way the country walker sees more, and gets more enjoyment out of what he sees than would be possible from a luxurious touring car. And this is the case simply because he is in the right mood to appreciate natural beauty, in that mental attitude described by Coleridge in his “Dejection Ode” :—

We receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live :
Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud !
And would we aught behold of higher worth,
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah ! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the earth.

“It is difficult in the extreme to give the reader a correct impression of Cornish scenery. Cornwall is not as beautiful a county as Devon. The interior lacks the richness and contrast of the Devon colouring, and there are tracts of which the general character is dullness and depression. The glory of

Cornwall is her sea-coast, and this is in very truth a glory.

“The opening lines of ‘Enoch Arden’ might be taken as a typical description of Cornish coast scenery:—

Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm ;
And in the chasm are foam and yellow sand ;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
In cluster ; then a mouldered church ; and higher
A long street climbs to one tall towered mill ;
And high in heaven behind it, a gray down.

“This is of the very essence of Cornwall, even if the poet did write it in the Isle of Wight. Windy headland and peaceful cove, stern cliffs and sunny sands, in happy alternation ; behind, great rolling hills swept by wind and sun, with deep, cool-shadowed valleys, filled with the music of streams hastening down their short courses until their babbling is merged in the deeper music of the ‘many-sounding sea’—that is Cornwall.

* * * * *

“We arrived at St. Ives about mid-day ; the morning had been dull, but a breeze springing up about noon swept away the mist ; the sky became cloudless, and the white and red sails of the fishing craft danced over the ‘myriad twinkling smiles’ of the bay, which was as blue as ever was the Bay of Salerno.

“Several of the river estuaries extend miles inland, and we found it profitable as well as pleasant, instead of going around them by road, to cross near their mouths by a ferry. We always welcomed these little voyages, generally of a small fraction of a mile, in the ferryman’s punt. One of them we shall long remember for the remarkable beauty of the scenery. The estuary was narrow, deep and winding, and the high shores were partly wooded and partly farm land. A solitary little vessel was unloading coal at the small pier. The tide was running out like a mill race, and it was a stiff but short pull across to the mossy stone stairs almost hidden by the overhanging foliage.

“ Our first evening in Cornwall was one of exceptional beauty. At the pretty town of Looe, half fishing-village, half watering-place, we had a memorable tea—memorable for its excellence and the appetite which we brought to it—in a modest and secluded upper room overlooking the ridiculous little high street, which the crier was making hideous with his unintelligible bawling. Before tea we had quite determined to spend the night in Looe, but afterwards we felt so fresh we decided to walk on leisurely five or six miles to Polperro. The evening was still and clear and the scenery wonderfully beautiful. From a height four hundred and fifty feet above the sea, we watched the sun sink in flaming glory behind the hills to the north-west. Below us, in the valley, lay a village called Talland. The moss-grown church tower was visible through the trees, with half-a-dozen cottages emitting curls of blue smoke from their chimneys. The sigh of the surf alone broke the stillness, until suddenly the chimes of Talland Church rang out sweet and clear. The whole scene formed one of those rare pictures which seldom exist but in imagination, and we were loth to descend from our hill to tramp on for half-an-hour through the long English twilight.”

* * * * *

Before dismissing this period, we feel constrained to quote from a letter, written after George's death, by one of the Professors of the University, known to us by name but not personally :—“ I knew George well when he was at College, as one of the most promising of my pupils and as one of the most lovable of men. When in England a year or two before the war, he stayed with some relatives of mine, and I remember their writing to say how strongly his attractive personality impressed them. The hopes of many have been cut short, and

words are but a poor comfort, but I hope that you will find some consolation in the thought of what he achieved and of the affection that he inspired in all who knew him."

On his return from England, George was admitted as a student-at-law at Osgoode Hall and also, as an articled clerk, entered the law office of the firm in which his father, before retiring from practice, had for many years been a partner. After eighteen months' probation, it was announced that a junior partnership would be offered by the firm to George as soon as he was called to the Bar.

George had been a member of the U.C. College Cadet Corps and had also had three years' military training in the Queen's Own Rifles. When the war broke out he offered himself, without delay, to serve in the ranks for overseas service. He was rejected on the ground that he was a little short-sighted. Undaunted by this failure, he soon afterwards proceeded to Valcartier Camp, in order to obtain a position in the Army Medical Corps. As he said himself, it would suit him much better to save life than to take it. He found, however, that there was no prospect of any active employment in such a capacity for months to come, and returned home rather crest-fallen. Later on, he learned that officers were wanted for the 12th Militia Battalion, York Rangers, successors to the "brave York Volunteers," whom Brock cheered on to victory at Queenston Heights. The prospect was that officers would be drafted from this battalion to some unit formed for active service. He forthwith applied to the York Rangers and was appointed a provisional lieutenant. After he had passed the

necessary examinations, he was confirmed in this rank and received his commission. The 12th York furnished a company to the new 35th Overseas Battalion and George became one of the subalterns of this latter regiment. He gave up his law studies and office work, and spent the autumn and winter of 1914-1915 in drilling and attending military lectures, taking up the task of equipping himself for his new calling with characteristic energy and conscientiousness.

One of George's friends, writing to us after his death, said :—
“ I do not know another man who looked upon the war so much as a Crusade as George did.” The speech which is given below in part, as reported in the *Upper Canada College Times* for December, 1914, will indicate whether this estimate of motives was correct. It was George's first “ public speech,” and was delivered at a dinner of his college fraternity in the winter of 1914 :—

“ MR. PRESIDENT.—In thinking over what I should attempt to say to-night in proposing this toast to ‘ Our Brothers in the Field,’ what first of all impressed me was that the subject on which I have to speak is a solemn one. I am well aware that this occasion is one for merriment, conviviality and good cheer, but, gentlemen, the subject of this toast is such an honourable one, that were I to treat it lightly, it would be wellnigh sacrilege. You would deem it unseemly to jest in proposing the toast to Our Empire ; then a thousand times more would it be unseemly to attempt to jest in proposing a toast to our friends and brothers, who not long hence will be called upon to risk, some of them perhaps to give up their lives, for our Empire ; yes, and for a cause even greater, nobler and more enduring than that of our Empire. I ask you then, brethren, to give me

your serious attention for a few minutes while I attempt to treat this subject with due honour.

“Gentlemen, I think we all take pleasure in contemplating a noble building, a striking painting, or some wonderful structure of modern engineering. Each of these achievements bears witness to human creative genius, to daring in the conception of the idea, to skill and patience in giving that idea a physical embodiment.

“Perhaps, as one of us walked across the front campus this morning, although he was in haste lest he should be late for the nine o'clock lecture, yet he could not refrain from stopping a moment to have a look at the familiar façade of University College. I think he was rewarded by a very real sense of pleasure. The noble building, with its massive grey tower, symmetrical outline and varied and interesting detail and carving, although an old friend, is ever a source of fresh satisfaction.

“How would you feel, gentlemen, if you came some morning and found in its place a grim and hideous mass of smoking ruins? Such destruction as that is nothing to what is happening in Europe every day, almost every hour, has been happening for months past, and in all probability will continue for months to come. Perhaps, as these words are spoken, the walls of some mighty French Cathedral are crashing to the earth, from which they rose slowly and patiently seven or eight hundred years ago. The noblest buildings are not spared, the loftiest bridges are demolished, the fairest cities are destroyed, humble dwellings which yesterday sheltered contented families no longer exist, and the former occupants are now homeless wanderers, or their bodies lie neglected in the filth of a near-by ditch. Such is war, and the glory of war has been sung from the earliest dawns of literature down to this age and General Bernhardt.

“Allow me to read you a clipping from this morning's paper. The words are the words of a retired German General,

Von Disfurth, and they originally appeared in a Hamburg newspaper, in which city the gentleman in question resides :—

“ ‘ We owe no explanations to anyone. Whatever act committed by our troops for the purpose of discouraging, defeating and destroying the enemy is a brave act and fully justified. Germany stands the supreme arbiter of her own methods. It is no consequence whatever if all the monuments ever created, all the pictures ever painted, all the buildings ever erected by the great architects of the world be destroyed, if by their destruction we promoted Germany’s victory. War is war. The ugliest stone placed to mark the burial place of a German grenadier is a more glorious monument than all the cathedrals ever put together. They call us barbarians. What of it ? We scorn them and their abuse. For my part, I hope that in this war we have merited the title “ barbarians.” Let neutral peoples and our enemies cease their empty chatter, which may well be compared to the twitter of birds. Let them cease to talk of the Cathedral of Rheims, of all the Churches and all the Cathedrals in France which have shared its fate. Our troops must achieve victory. What else matters ? ’

“ Gentlemen, the spirit of these words differs not one iota from the spirit which impelled the hordes of barbarians which swept over Western Europe eight or nine centuries ago. It is war for war’s sake. Those former ravages were followed by a period in the history of Europe still known as the Dark Ages. Gentlemen, if Germany were to win in this war, there would be a second and Darker Age not only for Europe but for the whole world.

“ What is the motive of our brothers now in the field ? If they have crossed the sea with no other motive than to return hate for hate, to add their small contribution to the general havoc and waste, to destroy a little more private property, to kill or maim a few more Europeans, this surely is no cause for our self-congratulation ; nor does the consideration that they are risking their lives in the enterprise, redeem such a

base motive. The man who walks a tight-rope over Montmorenci or goes over Niagara in a barrel, such a man is a hero only to persons of very limited intellect. But, gentlemen, we know that our brothers in the field are impelled by a motive far different from this. They know that they are in arms for the sacred cause of Freedom, Order, International Good Faith, and Peace.

“ Allow me to quote a spirited little poem by an American, Percy Mackaye. It appeared some weeks ago in the *Boston Transcript* :—

TO CANADA.

Men of Canada,
Fellow Americans,
Proud our hearts beat for you over the border,
Proud of the fight you wage,
Proud of your gallant youth
Sailing to battle for freedom and order.

On our own battlefields
Many's the bout we had,
Yankee, Canadian, Redcoat and Ranger ;
Yet our old brotherhood,
Staunch through the centuries,
Shouts in our blood now to share in your danger.

Ah ! 'tis a weary thing
Waiting and watching here,
Numbing ourselves to a frozen neutrality ;
Yet, in a world at war,
'Tis our good part to keep
Patient to forge the strong peace of finality.

Though, then our part be Peace,
Yet our free fighting souls,
League with your own 'gainst the world-lust of vandals ;
Yea ! in the dreadful night
We with your women weep,
And for your shroudless dead burn our shrine candles.

ON THE ROLL OF HONOUR

So, by the gunless law
 Of our sane border line,
 By our souls' Faith, that no border can sever,—
 Freedom—now may you fight,
 Waging the death of War,
 Silence the demons of cannon for ever.

Kinfolk of Canada,
 So may your allied arms
 Smite with his legions the Lord of Disorder ;
 God speed your noble cause,
 God save your gallant sons,
 Would we might sail with them over the border !

* * * * *

“ Waging the death of War,
 Silence the demons of cannon for ever.”

“ That, gentlemen, is the ideal. I think we would all agree that it is a worthy and desirable one. Not many of us believe with Bernhardt in the ‘biological necessity for war!’ But some of us, perhaps, may be inclined to doubt the possibility of the fulfilment of this ideal—‘to silence the demons of cannon for ever.’ But, gentlemen, there is such a thing as faith, and the very essence of a true ideal is that it should be hard to bring to pass.

“ Our brothers are bearing their part in the people's war. They are going to fight to make impossible a repetition of this madness which wrecks the world as a spoilt child in a fit of temper wrecks the playthings in its nursery. Be sure that the time is coming when the peoples of the world will no longer be content to be treated as the tin soldiers in the nursery of the militarists !

“ This is the cause, gentlemen, for which our brothers already in the field are privileged (and I hope and trust that many of us here before long may also be so privileged) to endure long months of uncertain and monotonous waiting in camp, amid heat and cold, dust and mud, to endure the discomforts of the dripping tent and the soaking blanket, the sweat and

grind of the route march, and at last the supreme trial of fire. Gentlemen, he must have the imagination of an ox who could contemplate the horrors of a modern battlefield without a tremor. But we have no doubts as to the spirit in which that trial will be faced by them, the spirit which will carry them forward to their purpose, though the very earth be shaken under their feet, and the heavens thunder like the crack of doom.

“Gentlemen, it is now, allowing for the five and a half hours’ difference in the standard time, the depth of night over Salisbury Plain. We can see in our imagination the great camp stretching out in every direction over the rolling moorland. The whole is wrapt in a stillness that is death-like, broken only by the muffled tramp of a sentry or the occasional neigh of a restive charger. Our brothers are deep in the dreamless sleep that is given as the reward of a day of toil. But in a short time from now, probably before some of this company have retired to rest, the still morning air, dark and heavy with the mist which constantly rolls over that lofty upland, will be riven by the sound of a multitude of bugles blowing the *réveillé*. Then the thirty-three thousand and our own brethren among them, will roll out of their blankets to begin another day of active service for the Empire and for the world.”

In this connection also, a letter to the *Toronto Globe* from one of the lecturers in law at Osgoode Hall, referring to another and later occasion on which George spoke on the subject of the war, may here be introduced:—

“The Editor,

“*The Globe*, Toronto.

“DEAR SIR,

“Lieutenant G. L. B. Mackenzie’s recent death in battle recalls a speech he made to his fellow-students rather more than a year ago, which I think deserves to be remembered, not so

much for the words used, as for the spirit which it breathed. Many of the students were, like him, in khaki. The war and enlistment were the only topics dwelt upon and the speeches naturally emphasized the adventurous and exciting aspects of a soldier's life and even the 'fun' to be had out of it. Late in the evening, Mackenzie spoke, with modesty but with much ability, and the atmosphere entirely changed. Almost with a shock our minds were recalled to the real issues of the war. We saw again women outraged, children murdered, freedom arrogantly assaulted and our country and Empire threatened and we realized all the more strongly, because of his reticence, that the speaker was not extolling fighting for itself, but was prepared to cheerfully endure whatever labour or sacrifice was necessary to vindicate the right and punish wrong. He was no knight-errant, seeking adventure for its own sake; but he had a knightly spirit, chivalrous and self-sacrificing, and he earned that night more than mere applause.

"I do not recall the incident purely as a tribute to Lieutenant Mackenzie, but because I believe that his type of gallant gentleman more powerfully appeals to young men than almost any other recruiting agency. The generous and chivalrous instincts illuminated by Sir Philip Sidney are still characteristics—sometimes latent, more often apparent—of very many young men.

"Yours very truly,
"S. D."

George had one sad duty to perform before he left Canada, and that was to attend, early in May, the funeral of the aunt who had been a mother to him for many years and loved him as a mother, and to assist in bearing her body to the grave.

In the spring of 1915 George and his two friends and comrades, Errol Platt and Arnold Davison, were selected, with three other officers, to take charge of a company drafted from the 35th, to proceed to England. The company, officers and

men, crossed the Atlantic in June and went into camp at Shorncliffe, near Folkestone, being attached to the 23rd Reserve Battalion, under Col. Bowen of Sherbrooke. Shortly afterwards George's father and sister also came to England and took up their quarters in Folkestone. This beautiful seaside town they found occupied by a large Canadian colony and thronged, in the late afternoon and evening, by the smart and keen-looking Canadian soldiers from the camps near by. The training of officers and men went on without interruption through the summer. One feverish wish animated all—to get to the front. George's sister found congenial work in one of the military hospitals in Folkestone, and both father and sister had the pleasure of entertaining George and his friends at frequent intervals. Arnold Davison (laid aside by a shrapnel wound, after ten months' service) was the first to cross the channel. He was separated from his two comrades from this time, having been attached to the 15th Battalion of Highlanders. The “vigorous, enterprising, cheery,” Arnold, as George described him, was much regretted by his two friends. In October, the summons came to them also. They crossed to Boulogne on the 13th and immediately joined the 3rd Battalion, the “Toronto Regiment,” in the trenches, and found themselves re-united to many old friends.

The officers of the Toronto Regiment at this period, were indeed a gallant company of young citizen soldiers, and a true band of brothers. It has been said that the fullest harmony always prevailed at the officers' mess, a harmony never disturbed by any note of discord. They were under the command of a

colonel who was beloved and honoured for his proved soldierly qualities. Most of them had been friends before they met at the front ; as our own young soldier wrote, the monotony of trench life was " relieved by the blessing of good fellowship and friendship." They were young men of intelligence and education and all animated by the same calm, confident and lofty purpose. Some of them had taken part, with marked distinction, in every terrible engagement of the 3rd Battalion since its advent to Flanders. Some of them sleep like our own young hero, beneath the sod of Belgium. Some, still living, bear the marks of honourable wounds upon their bodies. All alike share the imperishable renown of those who heard the call of duty, and rose up at once, and offered the best they had to give to a great and righteous cause. To all, or to their memories, we would here offer our tribute of admiration and affection. And not to them only, but to the splendid rank and file, who sustained their leaders with such loyalty and devotion, and did their part in winning a glorious name for the Toronto Regiment.

And here we would pause in our narrative and anticipate events, in order to make special mention of some of these friends, whose names will be for ever associated with the 13th June, 1916. On that day, which our own boy did not live to see, the Toronto Regiment added to their laurels by the capture of trenches held by the Germans on the hill known as Mt. Sorel. Douglas Mason, promoted to the rank of Major, directed the operations of the battalion in the field. The day brought him two wounds and the decoration of the Distinguished Service Order. On that day, too, Hal Gordon, the brilliant

young journalist, who had been a schoolmate of George's when they were both children at their first school, and Hugh Grasett, a member of George's college fraternity, died gallantly in the forefront of the battle. Captain Victor Van der Smissen, who, like the three others just named, had come through St. Julien, Givenchy and Festubert, was killed by a shell at the end of the day, when he was handing over the captured trenches to a relieving battalion. Between Victor and George an affectionate and brotherly friendship had existed for many years, and in the home of Victor's parents, whether in the city or at the summer settlement of Go Home Bay, George was always received as a son of the house. "We have just come out of a most splendid fight," wrote an officer of the 3rd Battalion, referring to the 13th June, "they called out the old lot to get back the lost ground, and we got it. Victor was simply magnificent. We attacked shortly after 1 a.m., and had the Huns driven right out into their own lines in less than an hour. Then we had to hold on. Through the attack and throughout the day, Victor was just an inspiration to everyone about him, cool-headed, absolutely self-controlled, and without a sign of fear or nervousness. But just before we were relieved, a shell got him, and he died a soldier's death on the ground he had won and held. We shall miss him terribly. He was one of the very best, loved and respected by all of us, worshipped by his men. But he went out in a splendid and successful battle, knowing that we had succeeded, doing his duty and unafraid, the death he would have chosen."

Not all of George's intimate friends were with him in the

3rd Battalion. Some of his oldest and closest friends did good service and earned promotion in other commands. Several of them were killed; others were wounded; two of them experienced what most of us would consider the worst of all disasters, and were doomed to languish as prisoners of war in a German prison camp.

To resume our narrative, during George's term at the front, of about seven and a half months' duration, he wrote us at Folkestone some eighty letters, besides those he wrote to friends in Canada, the United States and England. Whatever may have been his moments of weariness, discomfort, or discouragement, no note of complaint or despondency ever creeps into his correspondence with us. It is always calm, cheery and optimistic, reflecting, no doubt, the spirit of those gallant souls with whom he was associated. There was constantly apparent the effort to quiet apprehension in those who, with such equanimity as they could command, awaited events in England. As, for instance, when the battalion was moved into the Ypres salient, George reports a conversation with his colonel, who advises him to impress upon the friends at home, that there is no reason for estimating the new risks as more than normal. Noticeable also in the letters is the absence of bitterness in comments upon the enemy, whose proceedings are discussed with invariable good humour. Of exciting adventure, there is little to relate. Some of the phases of trench life are portrayed in a lively manner and there are, of course, some tragedies. The extracts that follow are, unless otherwise indicated, from letters to his father and sister.

“ 17th October, 1915.

“ Our life here is surely a curious and somewhat weird one, but cheerfulness reigns supreme, an occasional little grouch among the men (for instance, when for some good reason they did not get their ration of rum this morning at stand-to) does not mean much ; the poor chaps are really very patient and cheerful under the monotony of months of mole-like existence.

* * * * *

“ The Germans keep up a random fire from rifles, rifle batteries, and, occasionally, when they ‘ get their wind up,’ from machine guns all night. As soon as it gets light, they waste a bit more ammunition and again at the evening stand-to, from 5.30—6.30, they blaze away merrily.

“ We have not been shelled yet, but the German guns have been throwing a few into reserve positions behind us. Yesterday our guns gave them ‘ what-for ’ for a few minutes. I am not quite sure whether Fritz is the most nervous chap alive, or whether their staff still believe in the moral effect of noise and bullets singing through the air, forty feet up and occasionally hitting your parapet with a loud crack. The amount of ammunition they use must be something colossal.

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“ At night, just now, there is wiring to be done in front of our line. The thing to remember is to be motionless when flares go up, which is pretty often. Movement is the only thing that can be seen 200 yards off at night. The flares give the most beautiful displays at times ; they are fired from a special kind of pistol and rise to a great height, giving a white light like an arc light. Last night there was a great fire south of us, for a while, and the sky was deep crimson in that quarter. This, with the flares and rifle shots and distant bumping of guns, made the evening somewhat weirdly impressive. We

seem to be astride a gently sloping ridge, with the Bosches on a lower ridge about 200 yards away. Occasionally at night they shout across to us in English, and sometimes a man is heard singing. Two days' ago a German coolly walked on top of their parapet; in a second he was hit by one of our snipers. He was wounded, but before he was dragged back by a comrade, he was hit twice again by our sniper; this must have settled the poor chap. We have only had two men killed and one officer wounded in the Battalion so far since we came in on Thursday."

* * * * *

" 19/10/15.

" The air is clear and cold now, very preferable to the damp mist of our first three days, although of course a clear vision is conducive to artillery activity. However, our guns did some great practice on the parapet yesterday—sandbags were flying in the air merrily. The Germans did not return the compliment to our trenches, but to Battalion H.Q., and the batteries in the rear. They did little damage—a few splinters from high explosives was all we got.

" We stand-to before dawn. This morning the air was remarkably clear and the stars as bright as they are on a Canadian winter night—the old dipper, turned upside down, and great Orion 'sloping slowly toward the West.' There is always a sharp rattling of rifles and pinging of bullets, with an occasional bang from a trench mortar or rumble from a distant gun.

* * * * *

" We have just been enjoying the pretty sight of a British airman sailing serenely back of the German lines, white puffs of smoke, after a flash, clustering all round him, but he has succeeded in getting back safely and already some of our guns are tuning up—the result of his work in locating their target. His observer sends back his information to the guns by wireless."

“ 21/10/15.

“ We have just come in from Divine Service—the whole Battalion on our company parade-ground in front of our tents. Captain Gordon, son of the late Principal of Queen’s, was the Chaplain, a fine fellow in every way and I think much appreciated by the men.

* * * * *

“ Yesterday, Capt. Mason, Errol and myself, walked to a hill-top which commands a great stretch of country, and investigated an ancient mill there, in process of grinding corn as it has been doing for a couple of hundred years. The machinery is wooden and indescribably clumsy and quaint. At the top the whole structure can be felt to sway about a foot as the great arms swing majestically around. It reminded me of the cover to our old edition of “ Don Quixote,” and I sympathised with the old chap as I stood on the ground near the path of the arms as they came sweeping towards my head with irresistible force.”

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29/10/15.

“ Last night I went out on a patrol with my platoon-Sergeant and one man. My new platoon-Sergeant (my old one was wounded, you remember) is a specialist at this work and, of course, as I was practically new at this sort of work, I placed myself under him with instructions to ‘ carry on ’ and treat me as a new man. The night was one of the darkest I ever saw ; we went over the front from left to right, with the idea of gaining all the information we could as to the nature of the ground between our lines and the German. The distance between the lines varies enormously and the lines are very irregular. Your sense of direction soon ceases to be reliable on a misty night with rain, ground almost level and broken by old works, water-filled ditches, shell holes, etc., and star shells

(magnesia lights) going up absolutely on every side. There were some minutes when we were not clear about the identity of the wire entanglements which we came to rather unexpectedly; they were German at first, but the compass rather discouraged, but did not disperse this theory; the gruff 'Who's that?' of a startled sentry was very welcome; of course all sentries were warned that we were out. Our progress was faster than it would be on a less dark night, we were able to walk very cautiously, throwing ourselves flat when a star shell went up near us. We were wet and muddy when we came in at 12.30 p.m. I then had a watch until three, getting dried out by a fire after an issue of rum to the party.

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"I forgot to tell you about a Minenwerfer or trench mortar which Fritz uses now occasionally on our line and which brings down on them an immediate retaliation from our artillery. It started at dusk the other evening and we spotted about where it fired from and had great fun directing the artillery, as we watched the flash of the shrapnel explosions. Our artillery here has a marked ascendancy and always has the last word; they delight in the word 'retaliation,' and suggest it on the least excuse. This Minenwerfer goes high in the heavens (quite visible at night from the fuse), seems to be dropping where each one stands, but finally plunges a safe distance away; silence for a few seconds and then a really terrific explosion, but it never seems to do much damage—as yet our company have not suffered from it."

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" 24/10/15.

"This morning the new band made its first appearance at Church parade. It wasn't exactly like the Grenadier Guards, but really did pretty well. Afterwards Errol and I attended Communion service in the farmhouse with about 20 others, officers and men. The old Belgian farmer joined in the service (fortunately the Chaplain spoke French)."

“ 16/11/15.

“ This afternoon there has been some artillery activity, but it did not affect our company. We are chiefly engaged at present in studying drainage problems and after we have tackled a problem we look as if we had been spending the day in a trunk-sewer, but not a modern one—this mud is ancient, as if it came from the ‘ Cloaca Maxima.’

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“ Last night in the darkness we marched past close to a battery of our guns—certainly heavier than 18-pounders—as they were giving somebody or something a heavy drubbing ; it was an inspiring spectacle. ‘ Are you all ready ? ’ would come the officer’s voice. ‘ No. 1,’ ‘ No. 2,’ ‘ No. 3,’ ‘ No. 4,’ in reply ; then the officer’s voice again—‘ Battery, salvo, Fire ’—and then crash, roar, and a flashing glare. The word ‘ fire ’ would be cut short, or utterly demolished, by the instantaneous crash of all four guns firing so rapidly in succession that they combined into one roar. Further away could be seen the flashes of other batteries. It was nothing unusual ; at this very moment I hear our guns firing constantly, only I had never been close to a battery firing at night.

“ The weather is pretty cold here, sharp frosts every night and on some days it barely melts during the day, just enough to make the mud sufficiently glutinous to be real mud and to cave in the unrevetted sides of trenches.”

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“ 27/12/15.

“ Our Christmas was, of course, much like any other trench day ; however, we managed to obtain some nuts, raisins and dates for the men, and in the evening we had great fun giving each man a cup of steaming hot milk punch, made with condensed milk and rum.

"The day was quiet—a couple of casualties (killed) from sniping, however, in our company. An attempt at a truce about 2 p.m., we watched through a telescope, far away to the south. Needless to say the Germans were the ones who attempted it, many of them standing up on their parapet and waving; two of them walked out between the lines carrying a small white flag and shook hands and talked for a few seconds with a man who came from our lines. This chap will probably have cause to regret his action. You must understand that all this took place a long way from us and had nothing to do with us. Machine guns quickly discouraged further attempts at communication."

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" 2/1/16.

"Last night we managed to give the men of the company a real sit-down dinner in one of their long huts, about the shape of an Iroquois 'long house.' For ourselves and a guest of Dougle's, we captured two chickens, but the toughness of them was extraordinary. Apparently the Belgian country people do not eat chickens, as the peasant woman seemed mystified as to what use we could have for two of her chickens; however, we soon understood her surprise at our desire to eat them. An apparently flawless fork snapped in my hand as I attempted to sever a joint.

"On the 28th we had a bit of shelling from the Germans, 2 killed and 4 wounded in our company, but we were lucky to get off so easily. The men, even the ones who have just recently come out, took the ordeal splendidly."

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" 4/1/16.

"I had to read the burial service over a Corporal of my platoon, who was shot last night; the Chaplain could not be reached, so off I tramped to the little cemetery back of the line,

where I found half a dozen of the poor fellow's friends waiting disconsolately in the rain and gathering dusk. It was a very simple duty for me, as the C.O. had given me a slip with the parts of the service which are generally read. The only difficulty was to make oneself heard above the clatter of wagons on the road and the banging of a near-by battery."

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" 10/1/16.

" We are at last back in France, almost beyond the sound of the guns, beginning our official rest, which in the army does not mean a loaf, but a change of occupation. We are to have a daily routine of training in order to smarten up all ranks and to remove the deleterious effect of many months spent in the trenches, or close behind them.

" The night before last, after a somewhat noisy day from the artillery, we marched by moonlight back to the village and the tents, which we have so often occupied before. The next morning, that is yesterday, the battalion as a whole, for the first time since I have been here, took the road, headed by the band, and with a long train of baggage-wagons in the rear. Dismounted officers carried their packs—more in order to encourage the men than to save wagon space. The day turned out very fine, much like the best of our November days in Ontario, with a fairly cold west wind, the scenery grew steadily more attractive, the farms and villages and people more prosperous and cheerful, and the band, although not quite up to the Guards' standard, was sufficiently rhythmic and tuneful to make many forget sore feet and weighty packs. It was quite inspiring, swinging through a good-sized French town to the strains of 'La Marseillaise.' We were evidently somewhat of a 'show' to the wayfarers, as a whole battalion is not often seen very near the trenches. The further you go from the line the more ceremony and pomp does 'war' assume,

the gallery of Toronto Armouries perhaps presenting the best spectacle. I think the size of this war was brought home to me more forcibly than by anything I have since seen, by a seemingly endless column of well-kept motor trucks, *seemingly* endless, but they were carrying supplies for *one division only*; that was on the morning of our arrival last October.

"We are really in wonderful comfort here; the battalion is billeted in this hamlet and in three or four large well-kept farms in the close vicinity. Our company is right in the village, a stone's-throw from Battalion H.Q., and the Mess, which by the way is a really splendid room in the *Mairie* or Mayor's house. Errol and I have a large room with a stove and two little sleeping rooms off it, with real beds and a sort of canvas sheets—very clean, too—everything much cleaner than poor old Belgium. The people are simply bubbling over with kindness and want to serve you with coffee about every two hours. The country is really beautiful, even at this somewhat bleak season.

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"The men were quite excited this morning when they caught sight of a railway train in the distance, the first many of them had seen for six months or so."

On the 25th of January, George burst in upon us at Folkestone. As George put it, "This was the only war in history which was divided into school terms, with a week's holiday at the end of each term." George's eight-days' leave had arrived. He was looking broader, fuller in the face, and stronger than we had ever seen him. The rough life was agreeing with him, and the continual strain of danger and responsibility, we were most thankful to realize, had not found his nerves. The brief holiday was spent in Folkestone and

London, in company with his father and sister. The extracts from his letters, on his return to the front, are continued :—

“ 20/2/16.

“ Errol and I had a very fortunate tour in the trenches this last trip ; there was an almost daily duel between trench mortars at our bit of the line, 40 yards in one spot from the Huns. We only had 1 killed and 1 wounded in our company, not including two men who ‘ went nuts,’ from being close to exploding Minenwerfers, which are more dangerous to one’s nerves than to one’s body.

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“ One German plane took a pot-shot at the company on the road with a bomb, but missed us by 20 yards. This is my first experience of this phase. It is satisfactory to think that the German airman saw no change in the slow progress of the brown snake 3,000 feet below him.”

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“ 16/3/16.

“ We came out of the trenches a couple of nights ago and tramped back over the old four and a half miles, under a wonderful moonlit sky. The weather has changed completely, instead of snow and slush and biting east winds, we have warm suns and balmy breezes. The last day in the trenches, a lark sang joyously, far above the slimy clay and rotting sand-bags ; all the while the 18-pounders barking and screaming through the air, with an occasional German crump punctuating the racket ; but in the quiet moments the lark could be heard triumphantly above it all.”

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“ 23/3/16.

“ Your letter dated the 19th inst. came last night, and provided very real entertainment for about six of us, living in

the 'hotel'—as we call the cellar of the once large and prosperous farmhouse, now completely crumped, where the officers of the Battalion Reserve Company spend a usually untroubled sojourn, unmarked by gradations of day and night. This cellar is called 'the hotel,' not so much on account of the sumptuous accommodation, but because of the continual passage of guests, who drop in for a meal and a chat at any hour of day or night—Artillery F.O.O.'s, Intelligence Officers, Trench Mortarites, and other free lances, who fancy its handy, yet peaceful situation, 300 yards behind the line."

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" 23/3/16.

" Ever since I have come out here, that is during the last five months, we have made great strides towards victory, because the Army is getting some wonderful new inventions in all sorts of things, each one better than anything the Germans have used yet. The great superiority in equipment and weapons, which the Germans had at the beginning and for the first year, has, I think, now ceased to exist and in some cases the superiority is now on our side. In men, of course, we have always had the better of them—that is, in quality, and now, in numbers also.

" I wish you would send me a cheap edition of one of Wm. J. Locke's novels. I have only read two of them, *Simon the Jester* and *Septimus*. I have just finished a rather unusual and interesting book by Lucas Mallet, *The Gateless Barrier*. A book is useful during long night watches when not in the front line, as at present."

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" 28/3/16.

" Your letter came this morning, most eagerly looked for by me, but I do not for a moment forget how your eyes prevent you from writing comfortably, so please never overwork them by writing to me."

In the beginning of April, the battalion was moved, with the rest of the Canadians, into that perilous section of Belgium known as the "Ypres salient." The Canadians divided the honour of defending this much-assailed protrusion of the British lines with the Guards' division, considered to be the flower of the British Army. On 4th April, George writes:—

"I am scribbling this in a tiny dug-out in a certain redoubt, behind a famous part of the line. I am by myself with 24 N.C.O.'s and men—the rest of the regiment are in billets in support to the brigade.

"We had a great time coming in here the other night. After a rather tiring night-march along roads congested with troops and transport, and intermittently shelled at a few spots, I was met by a guide, who was to take us to our redoubt. He promptly lost himself and us in the mist and then followed several rather humorous, but at the same time unpleasant, hours, of waiting and scouting about, all the while a really noisy bombardment going on. After one of my sergeants had been painfully hit in the foot by a rifle bullet, two of my scouts returned from a successful search for Brigade H.Q., bringing with them a very polite Staff-Captain, who guided us, after a little meandering, to our post, which we took over about 2.30 a.m., during the biggest noise I have ever heard. However, most of the guns were ours and during such a racket you don't trouble about individual explosions, only occasionally would one be inclined to duck as a splinter or stray bullet whanged past in the darkness. This sounds much worse than it was. However, my men were dog-tired from carrying heavy loads and constant blocking on the road; yet they all were splendid and snored tremendously when we were halted. I congratulated two of my men on their good work in locating H.Q. in a puzzling blanket of mist; their intelligence showed

up in rather bold contrast to that of our 'guide' who had been on the ground for some weeks.

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"Tell father I have finished *The Derelicts*, and think it a noble book. I think he got the wrong idea about it when he glanced into it."

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"6/4/16.

"We are still in the same little redoubt and are likely to be for some days' more. Movement has to be curtailed to an absolute minimum during the day and no smoke from a fire can be allowed. Consequently the days are not marked by much interest, only the unceasing banging of the guns and whistling of the shells going both ways above us. Among the 24 of the garrison is a French-Canadian, La Rose, who fortunately used to be a cook in the R.C.R. I allow him to keep a brazier of coke alight and he does the cooking for all of us. After dusk, I put the men to work on the wire or drainage or something of the sort. At present we are rather short of engineering supplies and it is quite a job to devise work for everyone, to keep them from getting too stale and bored with life. For the first couple of days I rather enjoyed being so much alone with my thoughts, but I am beginning to feel a keen desire for our return to the company.

"Your copies of *World Wide* arrived and I have found some good stuff in them. In a little article about Sir Douglas Haig, in the *Daily News and Leader*, I find a most accurate description of the country behind the trenches, which is searched by the guns. After speaking of the busy scenes and crowded roads behind the Army, he goes on:—"I penetrated into the strange solitude in front where nothing moving is seen above ground, where the orchards, gardens and fields

have drifted back to desolation; where the trees all seem stricken with lightning, and the cottage and farmstead are heaps of stones, and where, but for the voices that scream overhead, you might believe that you were alone in the world.' That is an accurate picture of the scene we see from the redoubt."

To a Friend.

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" 8/4/16.

"We are seemingly alone in the world, not even a telephone, thank heaven, as the wires have been cut for some days and H.Q. cannot bother us about the non-return of the corks of empty rum jars, or the number of Bull-Dog pattern wire-cutters in the platoon.

"About two hours ago we had front seats at a battle spectacle—about 1000 yards' off, I judge—clouds of black, and slimy green smoke, broken by hundreds of shrapnel flashes, and here and there an upshooting dust and earth pillar from an exploding heavy, against a suitable background of sullen, evil-looking woods and a leaden sunset."

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" *Billets in Belgium,*

" 17/4/16.

"We arrived here this morning at 4.30 o'clock. This place affords the most complete change and rest we have yet had. The war seems a long way off; the busy streets crowded with soldiers of three nations, might mean a jubilee or international fête, were it not for an occasional house with a gaping shell-hole in its wall, or the passing of a convoy of ambulances with closed curtains.

"At 11 a.m., I woke on the floor of a room, which was once evidently a rather pleasant bedroom with fireplace, cupboards and two windows, now very bare and rather dingy from military wear and tear. On the ceiling there is a curious circular fixture which must have served to support the

inevitable bed-canopy. McNee has procured some straw, so to-night we shall have a soft sleep. Before lunch, two of us discovered some military baths—a great luxury after two weeks without a more complete change than socks.”

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“ 21/4/16.

“ I have an off-day to-day because we were out last night on a working party, getting back at 4 a.m., rather tiring job. I fell into a shell hole and became completely covered with mud, not excepting my nose and mouth.

“ On reaching our billets the men had a hot meal of tea, beans and bacon and also a rum issue. They are living in what must have been a convent or seminary of a very dingy and unwholesome variety, but as a billet, A1. The sergeants are using a room, evidently the former chapel ; at one end figures of saints and virgin still look down from their niches on the often disordered array of unlovely military equipment and personal belongings.”

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“ 23/4/16.

“ *Easter Sunday.*

“ To-day the weather is glorious, bright and just pleasantly warm with fleecy clouds sailing over the blue. The battalion paraded to a field on the edge of the town for Divine Service, Captain Gordon, the Chaplain, giving us a fine talk ; afterwards, Holy Communion in the ante-room at H.Q.”

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“ 30/4/16.

“ The operations which you noted in the *communiqué* of last Thursday were carried out by the other half of our brigade—very successfully, too. At dinner, about 6 p.m., we got a message to stand by to move at a moment’s notice—presently a really heavy bombardment was going on in front. However,

we did not move, as a message came a couple of hours' later that the situation was well in hand and quieter—'quieter' was rather amusing as just then the row was at its crescendo, caused by a bombing attack to the south. We slept in our clothes with everything at hand, one of us awake in each company."

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"5/5/16.

"Poor old Errol died this morning from a bullet-wound in the head, received while he was patrolling at night with two of his scouts. I expect to be allowed to go to the funeral; the arrangements are not yet complete."

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Henry Errol Beauchamp Platt, of Toronto, graduated from the University of Toronto in 1913, with honours in political science and was awarded a Fellowship. For a year after his graduation he acted as a tutor in political science at the University and then proceeded to the study of law. He was a member of the University football team and also of the Thirteen Club and Historical Club. A writer in the *University Monthly* for July, 1916, bears testimony to the fineness of intellect, courtesy and manliness which distinguished him and strongly impressed those who knew him. One remark of his remembered by the present writer was that it was the first duty of an officer to provide for the comfort of his men.

To a Friend of Errol Platt's in Canada.

"7/5/16.

"Having lived with Errol in the last year in the closest intimacy, I learned something of his manly and lovable qualities, and believe me, my sense of loss is very deep and real also.

"Errol's work as Battalion Intelligence Officer called for high qualities of mind and heart. As you of course realize, his death from a rifle wound received when on patrol with two of his men only 20 yards from the enemy's lines, was in the highest sense honourable, and an ever-shining example of cool devotion to duty. The work of gaining information about the enemy's line and his movements is absolutely necessary and often dangerous in the extreme.

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"Yesterday, two sergeants of his old platoon, No. 4 (Sergts. Burger and Braddick), Lambert of his scouts, and myself were given permission to leave the line to be present at his burial at Lissenthock Military Cemetery, which lies in a beautiful country 10 miles behind the trenches. Our Chaplain, Captain Gordon, conducted the service. The afternoon sun shone brightly and a crisp breeze rustled through the new leaves. The day was full of Spring, and the grain of poetry in every man's nature was stirred by thoughts too deep for tears, yet underneath all was a gladness unconquerable and a strong assurance."

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" 12/5/16.

"After a tour, which cost us comparatively few casualties, we are back in Divisional Reserve and busy cleaning up and getting the men in shape again. Weather still warm and fine and the country looking splendid, very different from the desolate mud plain that it was six weeks' ago. This afternoon I had my first ride for years, with Bert Alley. I borrowed the Paymaster's horse and we rode over to see John Cartwright. John is an exceptionally fine-looking chap and the old General and his young aide-de-camp make a couple worthy of the brush of an artist. I found I could stick on the saddle all right, but I am sure my style was abominable."

The "old General" alluded to was the gallant General Mercer, of Toronto, who was killed on 2nd June, 1916.

* * * * *

" 20/5/16.

"At present we are bivouacked in the once beautiful grounds of a château or villa. The building is sadly battered and we are not using it. The men are building sand-bag shelters for themselves, under the splendid beeches and elms of the park. The officers have a large hut, or dug-out, as it is ambiguously called, but I have preferred so far to sleep on a stretcher under the trees—really very comfortable these fine moonlight nights. Last night I had a working party in the trenches until 1.30 a.m.

* * * * *

"By the way, the two sergeants and the private who brought Errol in have each been awarded the new Military Medal."

* * * * *

" 1/6/16.

"We marched back here last night by platoons from the trenches, through a perfect summer night, bright with stars and most of the way over a dry by-road, not *pavé*, through the fields and under the long lines of graceful elms—a great contrast to march conditions during the winter months, slugging along through muddy paths or over greasy *pavés*, blocked with transport and all through inky blackness. Last night my platoon finished very strong, most of them whistling; they hardly recognized our huts, which we were in a month ago, since they are now almost hidden in the foliage of a wood.

"The way things look at the moment, my leave should commence a week from Sunday night and I should arrive in Folkestone on the afternoon of Monday, the 12th. The leave-train will take me right through to London, if you have already left Folkestone."

He sometimes indulges in reflection and indicates his own feelings with regard to the war and other subjects.

“ 17/10/15.

“ It is really a great change out here after the inactivity and boredom of camp in England. It is something to feel that we are actually helping to hold a bit of the line behind which lies France, and in a sense, England, and all the decent things that each of them stands for in the civilization of this planet.”

* * * * *

“ 12/3/16.

“ Thanks so much for yours enclosing the article about Rupert Brooke. I like the poem of Brooke's which is quoted:—

“ We have found safety with all things undying,
The winds, and morning, tears of men and mirth,
The deep night, and birds singing and clouds flying,
And sleep and freedom, and the autumnal earth.
We have built a house that is not for Time's throwing,
We have gained a peace unshaken by pain for ever.”

“ If he has written only a few other things like that, he must surely be classed with the great English poets.”

It so happened that this was all of Rupert Brooke's poetry that George ever saw. There can be no doubt that his heart would have been thrilled by the other four noble “ 1914 ” sonnets. The sonnet, above quoted in part, was found by us in full in a little pocket-book which George carried about with him. The remaining lines are:—

War knows no power. Safe shall be my going,
Secretly armed against all death's endeavour;
Safe, though all safety's lost; safe where men fall;
And, if these poor limbs die, safest of all.

" 21/3/16.

" Your acquaintance (an old Tory M.P.) must be a rather interesting man. I wonder how his old leader, Disraeli, would 'make out' at this time in England's history—one could hardly imagine him being as useful as Lloyd George, but probably more inspiring than Asquith. After all I think his ancient enemy would better fill England's need of a real leader. If Gladstone had ever had to wage a war of principle like this one, I think he would have proved as great a leader in war as in peace."

* * * * *

To a Canadian Friend.

" 8/4/16.

" What use in recalling those care-free days when we used often to dance together mirthfully in warm, bright rooms, or those summer days of laughter at 'Go Home,' when life seemed mirrored in the sweet sunshine and myriad-twinkling waters or those more recent days when four of us at night would fare forth in happy *camaraderie*, to try the entertainment of the city or the moonlit northern road, and then back to your pleasant hearth for supper and a song perchance before good-night. And don't forget those few days of June, 1913, when we joyfully played tourist together to St. Albans and other spots of ancient sweetness.

" Merely because good and happy things are past it should not make one sad to look back at them, and yet it does !

" But the goodness of these things, and the happiness we have felt in them, and above all the happiness of sharing happiness with our friends—these are surely still ours and will be preserved for us always.

" I know you won't mind me enclosing a clipping from *World Wide*, which perhaps you have already seen. I found it yesterday and have been reading it over at odd times since."

The above letter was written when George was "alone with his own thoughts" in the "Redoubt," in "solitary confinement," as Major Mason described it. The clipping referred to is from an article in the *Contemporary Review* and is, in part, as follows:—

"It is when we are most alone, and at our highest and best, that this sense of communion with God Himself becomes clear and strong. For religious men, this has ever been one great token of immortality, 'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us and intimates Eternity to man.' Such an experience is not present with us at all times, but when it comes, it gives the most intense feeling of reality which we can know. It is like the branch which came floating out of the Unknown to answer the doubts of Columbus and his companions; it gives clear tidings of the New World that lies beyond the sea and the night."

* * * * *

"3/5/16.

"I found a Canadian magazine of May, 1914, in this dug-out; it is an unusually good number and, owing to its pre-war date, is quite refreshing reading. A section of it, headed 'Current Events,' is of curious interest. Among notes about Panama Canal Act and its partial repeal, Galsworthy's Indictment of Social Conditions, the Arraignment of War by Alfred Noyes, in 'The Wine Press' (the poem about the Balkan War, which I heard him read in Toronto)—among all these far-away things, there is a paragraph about the war-scare between Germany and Russia, the increasing of the army of each of them, the bone of contention seemingly being the Polish question; but the paragraph is short and the subject is treated as of only moderate and transitory interest. Then, in the Literary Notes, there are short reviews of new books of poems by Albert D. Watson and Alfred Noyes and Tagore, with quotations which made me think of the small hanging

shelf in the library at 46. One gets the feeling, while reading this magazine, that life for any of us can never be at all the same as before the war. The most triumphant peace will not efface the memory of the enemy. Before, a Canadian was a friend to all the world.

"Townshend's surrender came as a great shock to us. I suppose the relieving force were forced to tell him that the position was hopeless—one more in the long list of stupid, but gallant British failures—one more chance for the British people to show their Mark Tapley brand of dogged cheerfulness and perseverance. The Irish situation is painful indeed, but will serve to definitely crystalize Irish loyalty and will put the black sheep completely beyond the pale.

"The French are still holding stubbornly at Verdun, thank God. Sometimes one feels the wish that the great British Army should take a more active part in the struggle, but the time must come."

* * * * *

" 23/5/16.

"Your letter of the 19th reached me last night. Those rural excursions in search of wild flowers sound awfully fine—Lyminge, Etchinghill, Elham, those ancient names even are refreshing after the jumbled nomenclature and numbering of trench and dug-out. There is something back of those quaint old-village names; they have been mouthed by scores of generations to whom they were the centre of life; but for whom will 'Crab Tree Lane' or 'Great Oxford Street' or 'S.O.37,' stir ought but disgusted remembrance of their weary length of rolling sand-bags and the varied stench of it. This by way of a little artistic 'grouse,' not because I personally feel at all miserable over it."

* * * * *

" 29/5/16.

"Thanks for (Sir E. Grey's) *Aims of the Allies*. It is very convincing and refreshing. It is tremendously important

that we all keep our Aims in mind just now, when some impatient spirits hold that trench warfare can go on for ever and that Germany is as much beaten as she will ever be. We can never have a satisfactory peace until the spirit of Germany, the spirit with which she started the war, is broken, and I think it can only be broken by defeats in the field and not by weariness only and economic pressure. Only this afternoon, we were talking to an officer of another battalion, who professed to believe that peace was in sight and that the actual negotiations are in progress. Even if the German Government see nothing but defeat for Germany in the future, their hands are tied, because they have told the German people that they have won the war. What would happen to the German Government if peace was now proclaimed on our terms? And a compromise is an unthinkable calamity."

* * * * *

The above remarks concerning a premature peace, interested us greatly. It seemed to us that if any people should have been in a hurry for peace, it was the men who were facing danger and hardship at the front. At home in England, patience was a virtue too often conspicuous by its absence. Too often was one condemned to listen to the utterances of pessimism with unrelieved and indiscriminate censure of the overburdened Government of the country.

To a Relative in Canada.

" 21/5/16.

" Thanks so much for your letter of May 4th and for the tracts. I feel that in the past I have not at all realized nor appreciated your thoughtful and steady love towards me. May God bless you for it.

"At present we are bivouacked not far behind the line, in what was once the luxurious villa of a wealthy man; now only the fresh green canopy of the lofty beeches and elms, many though with shattered branches, retains its former beauty; everything else is marred by the ugly work of war. The house is uninhabited, and sand-bag huts are scattered through the grounds. This afternoon the sun is slanting sweetly through the trees, and, in spite of the intermittent crashing of the guns, the birds are singing with joyous unconcern.

* * * * *

"I am afraid you people in Canada imagine our life out here as being much more 'heroic' than in reality it is. As a matter of fact it is a drab and monotonous existence, relieved by the blessing of good fellowship and friendship, and broken occasionally by a few minutes of heart-throbbing excitement, and sometimes, too, by sudden grief, which nevertheless is half gladness."

We have often dwelt in thought on the last words in this summing up of life in the trenches—"sudden grief, which is nevertheless half gladness"—coupling them with the exaltation of spirit revealed in that letter concerning Errol Platt's funeral, where our boy speaks of "thoughts too deep for tears, yet underneath all a gladness unconquerable and a strong assurance." Our Divine Master, in full view of the agony of the garden and the Cross awaiting Him, said to His perplexed followers, "These things have I spoken unto you that *My joy* might remain in you." Surely our young soldier, with death cutting down friends and comrades around him, and the menace of death hanging over his own head, had already tasted of the Divine joy that is born in sorrow, had learned something of the glory of self-renunciation and sacrifice.

On the 9th of May, George wrote to his sister :—" I shall have a simply huge account at the Bank of Montreal by the time my leave comes round—about a month from now in the ordinary course of events. I am looking forward to treating you and father to a real spree, somewhere or other." On the 1st of June, he wrote :—" The way things look at the moment my leave should commence a week from Sunday night and I should arrive in Folkestone on the afternoon of Monday the 12th. The leave train will take me right through to London if you have already left Folkestone."

We had told him that we would proceed to London on the 12th and would hope to meet him there, if he failed to reach Folkestone on an earlier day. He did not come to Folkestone, nor did he come to London, and the leave that came to him from the trials and perils of the trenches was a longer leave than any of us had planned. For, in the afternoon of the 10th, the brief official announcement which has struck desolation into many a heart and home in these days, was placed in our hands: our soldier had been "killed in action" on 7th June. 7

From letters received later and from conversations with comrades returned wounded from the front, we gradually pieced together the story of that day.

On the 2nd June some of our Canadian trenches between Hooze and Hill 60, had been lost to the enemy. One of the battalions which had the honour of being selected to retake the positions was the Toronto Regiment, which had just been moved back for a rest. The battalion was moved up to the front again at once and on 5th June occupied some shallow and hastily constructed trenches on the edge of a wood, named "Armagh Wood" by an Irish regiment. The trenches to be retaken were on "Mt. Sorel," on the other side of the wood. On 6th June the rain fell all day and filled the trenches: there was also heavy and long-continued shelling by the enemy causing many casualties. In the words of an eye-witness, "The trenches were in a vile condition, mud in any quantity, badly battered by shells and many dead lying around in various states of preservation." There, in intense discomfort, the battalion was held, waiting the order to advance and attack. (The attack was finally made on the 13th June, the battalion having been moved back on 8th June for reinforcement and a short rest.)

While the battalion was in front, it was of great importance to learn all that could be learned of the strength of the enemy and reconnaissances were made for this purpose. On the night of 6th June, George crossed "No Man's Land" in company with Sergeant Fred. Burger, an experienced scout, to reconnoitre two positions in the German lines, which, if heavily defended, might be serious obstacles in the way of the Canadian advance. One of the positions was successfully investigated, but the two explorers were observed, fired upon and obliged

to withdraw. Early in the morning of the 7th, they went out again, entered the front enemy trench at a point where it was unoccupied and gained a complete insight into the other position. While moving along the trench, however, a sentry was encountered. In the "lively five minutes" that ensued, the sentry was laid upon the earth, while another sentry who had been aroused, fired and wounded the sergeant in the thigh, just as he had climbed out of the trench. A third sentry also appeared on the scene. All this was in broad daylight, but, fortunately, the Germans did not venture outside their trench. George, of course, stayed with his wounded comrade, and as the ground was well covered with bushes, the two worked their way back to safety. Those who saw George and spoke with him when he came in, describe him as soaked by the rain and caked with mud, but pleased with his adventure and in a very happy frame of mind.

He proceeded at once to report the information which had been secured—information which Colonel Allan has described as "valuable" and "urgently required"—to Battalion Headquarters some distance in the rear. He reached his objective in safety and made his report. On the way back he stopped for a moment at Company Headquarters and spoke to his batman and then went on to the nearest platoon of his own company. At an exposed spot, which had, apparently, up to this time, escaped the observation of hostile sharpshooters, he was seen to sink upon his knees. Then he fell backwards "like a person fainting," and lay still. He had been shot through the heart by an enemy sniper, probably from the height known

as "Observatory Ridge." A sergeant and private of the battalion, under the fire of the Germans, crept out and brought in the lifeless body to the nearest cover. Our boy lay in the open trench all day, under a smiling heaven, for the rain had ceased, and safe now from all harm from the shells and bullets which flew intermittently above him. At night he was taken to the rear and a day or two later, laid to rest near his friend, Errol Platt, in the Military Cemetery at Lissenthjoek, near Poperinghe, Belgium.

It was while the battalion was waiting in readiness for an attack, under the conditions above described—conditions modestly referred to by Major Mason as "rather strenuous"—that George wrote his last letter. It bears date the 6th June, but did not reach us until the 14th. It was in a soiled condition, leading us to believe that it had been found in George's pocket and mailed by some kind, unknown hand.

"Trenches,

"June 6th, 1916.

"DEAREST FATHER AND ELEANOR,

"A most glorious message has just come to us from Army H.Q., and I have just shouted it into the men's dug-out, making it heard above the racket of the guns. 28 German Warships sunk, including the *Hindenburg*, and 14,000 Austrian prisoners.

A not too cheerful situation has been changed for us in a twinkling and we all now set about our own little job with lighter hearts and sure confidence that it is not in vain.

“No more at present.

“Fondest love to you both,

“Your loving Son,

GEORGE.

Such was his last tender message to those he loved! In this hastily scribbled note it was gratifying to find that “The Cause” and the share of his companions and himself therein, were, as ever, in his thoughts; gratifying, too, to know that his outlook upon the fierce and sombre scene in which his young life was soon to go down was full of confidence and courage.

Several weeks later the first instalment of his personal belongings arrived. It was a little packet containing his watch, cigarette case, penknife, etc., such articles as he would carry about on his person. Amongst them, much dilapidated, was a little book which his father had sent him, a copy of *The Happy Warrior*, a devotional book for soldiers, commended, in a few words of introduction, by Lord Roberts. Some of the texts of Scripture George had underlined with a lead pencil. Amongst the passages so noted are the following:—

Under the title *The Training of the Warrior*, “It is good

for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me and ye shall find rest unto your souls."—*Lam. iii*, 27. *Matt. xi*, 29.

Under the title *Rest in Weariness*, "I, the Lord, have satisfied every weary soul : I have replenished every sorrowful soul."—*Jer. xxxi*, 23, 25.

Under the title *Hardships of the Way*, "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness."—*Heb. xii*, 11. "Thou shalt forget thy misery and remember it as waters that pass away : thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning."—*Job xi*, 16, 17.

We received letters of sympathy from many quarters. Not a few of these contained affectionate tributes to the character and influence of our boy, and testified to the esteem in which he was held and the kindly feelings he inspired. We do not propose to repeat these here, but the following extracts from letters, chiefly referring to the events of the 7th June, may properly be reproduced.

From Lt.-Col. W. D. Allan, D.S.O.

" 10/6/16.

"George was in my company in the Queen's Own before the war, and it was with pleasure that he was welcomed as an officer in this regiment last Fall. His service over here has been

marked with intelligence, energy, courage, and good spirits, and his loss to the regiment is such that cannot easily be replaced.

"His last duty, the reconnaissance of a new German position, resulted in the obtaining of much valuable information which was urgently required.

"We are proud to have been associated with such a man as George, and extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy to you in your loss."

Colonel Allan himself has since died, after a protracted illness, from the effect of a wound in the head by a fragment of shell.

From Major D. H. C. Mason, D.S.O.

"7/6/16.

"I am very sorry indeed to send you bad news of George. This morning, after carrying out an important and very successful reconnaissance, he was hit through the heart and killed instantly by a sniper. I can't tell you what pain it gives me to send you this, for I know what it will mean to you and Miss Mackenzie.

"During the past seven months I had become very, very fond of George and shall miss him greatly, as indeed we all shall. He was always cheery under the most trying circumstances and always ready to do anything, his own work or anyone's else's. There was never an unpleasant or dangerous bit of work that he was not more than ready to undertake.

"During the past few rather strenuous days, George carried out, on his own initiative, several daring and very valuable reconnaissances over unknown ground. This morning he reconnoitred a new enemy trench, at close quarters, accompanied by a sergeant. The sergeant was hit in the leg and George brought him in."

From Private Robert McNee, 3rd Battalion.

"7/6/16.

"Just a few lines to extend to you my deepest sympathy in your loss of your son, George. I have been Mr. Mackenzie's batman since last November, and looked after him as well as I could till the last. That morning he called me to make breakfast, and while I was preparing it he went out down the trench, saying he would be back in five minutes. He had just seemed to have left, when another officer brought in the news.

"Not only his platoon, but the whole company feel the loss, as he was so fearless, and could always be found on the job. Ever so many in the battalion have come to me expressing their sorrow at me losing my boss, so, Sir, you can be proud to know he was so popular, and may console to think that no one could have a finer death than for one's country.

"I have been shown many kindnesses from him and as a soldier it was a pleasure to obey and as a man a pleasure to serve, besides the more I knew of him the better I liked him.

* * * * *

"We have stirring times ahead of us and if I'm spared to come through this awful time, I shall always have fondest remembrances of your son.

"Trusting this finds you in the best of health and spirits, hoping you don't find it too hard to read this,

"Yours sincerely, etc."

* * * * *

From Sergt. F. Burger, 3rd Battalion.

"We were to make an attack on the 8th June, so on the night of the 6th June your son and myself went out to see if we could find out if the German front line was heavily manned. We did not get very much information, as we were seen by the enemy and they fired on us, so we had to return. So we decided that we would attempt it again in the early hours of the morning, as we would not be able to go out again unless

we went that morning, as our artillery was going to open up in the afternoon ; so we went out about a quarter to five in the morning on June the 7th. Well, we reached the German front line and we got into the trench and we worked to the left. I was a little in advance of your son at the time, and I almost ran into a German, which meant a lively five minutes, in which I got shot through the thigh. We made for our trench, which your son helped me to reach ; but we had got all the information we had wanted so I did not get wounded for nothing. After we got in, your son went to Headquarters to report on what he knew, while I was taken to the dressing station, and it was on the way back from Headquarters that your son got killed. There was a bad place in the trench which had been blown in by a shell and it was when crossing this that your son got killed. I need not mention that your son was one of the bravest officers we had ; he feared nothing, and was highly respected by all. He died as only a soldier would like to die.

“ I am getting on fine, although it was a pretty bad wound. I am able to walk but I still have a limp. I was deeply moved when I heard of the death of your son a few hours after I was wounded, as I thought the world of him.”

* * * * *

From Professor W. H. Van der Smissen, M.A., a retired Member of the Faculty of University College, Toronto, father of Captain Victor Van der Smissen.

“ Bromley, Kent.

“ 14th June, 1916.

“ For the last ten years George had been united to our boy by the ties of strong affection and intimate friendship. His visits in particular, to our summer cottage were a constant delight. The memory of his bright smile and winning ways will always remain with us, and I know that Victor will mourn his loss as that of a brother.”

From the same.

19th June, 1916.

"Our David and Jonathan are no longer separated. Victor was killed instantly by a shell on the 15th. He died in the flush of conscious victory.

"They were lovely and pleasant in their lives and in their deaths they were not long divided."

In the letter of the 14th June, the touching little poem, "Carry On," quoted below, written by Professor Van der Smissen on the occasion of the death at the front of the only son of a friend, a Canadian Army Chaplain, was enclosed:—

"CARRY ON."

Soldier and priest, his suppliant hands upraised,
The sacrificial garland on his brow,
Stood Xenophon, the friend of Socrates,
Who led his Greeks from Tigris to the sea,
Before the altar of Olympian Zeus
At Elis, offering sacrifice and prayer
For Victory against the Theban hosts,
His country's foes, on Mantinea's plain.
But lo! when from the altar rose the flame
Came a swift messenger and from afar
Cried out: "O Xenophon, thy son is slain!"
Firm stood the father, but removed the wreath
As one who mourned the dead, and carried on
Unflinching, both prayer and sacrifice.
But when the messenger of death spake on:
"He nobly fell, fighting to save his friends!"
No longer mourning, Xenophon restored
The wreath, and offered thanks unto the gods,
Bending his own will to the Will Divine.
And so, dear friend, whose only son was slain,
Giving his life that others might be saved,
Thou too, a soldier-priest, wilt carry on,
Undaunted still, both sacrifice and prayer
Blending thine own will with the Will Divine.

At a later date the following lines, composed by Professor Van der Smissen with reference to Victor and George, were handed to us, and with these this record may fittingly be closed :—

HAIL AND FAREWELL.

Hail and Farewell ! O gallant youths, in life
Lovely and pleasant ever, and in death
United ! Pure of heart and perfect sons !
Ye took the only way and followed it
Unto the glorious end, your work well done.
On faith and love ye fed, and giving both
To others, led them on to Victory.
Truth, Duty, Valour, such your motto was
Such be your epitaph. Hail and Farewell !
For you the Victor's crown, for you a life
That bears immortal fruit in wider spheres
Of joyous action, and some charge to speed
The coming of the Kingdom of your Lord.
For us the sad, sweet memories of the love
That bound and binds us to you, and the hope
To claim our precious treasures once again,
Free from all taint of earth-born dust and stain.

Our little task of love is completed : the wreath is woven and laid upon the grave. Yet not in gloom do we turn from that grave to take up the round of little things that make up life and must be done ; to run with patience the race that is set before us. There has risen in the heart, and at times will rise

again, that ancient, bitter cry of the Hebrew king, "Oh ! my son, my son ! Would God I had died for thee ! my son, my son !" yet we, too, have learned that grief may be "half gladness," that even those who are "sorrowful" may be "alway rejoicing." We rejoice that he whom our soul has loved has met the stern test that awaited him without faltering, that he has played the man, and left a fair record behind him. We rejoice that it has been his privilege to give himself, and our privilege to give him, not for our Empire only, but, in his own words, "for a cause even greater, nobler and more enduring than that of our Empire," for the cause of Humanity and the World's Freedom. Not unmindful of his limitations and shortcomings, we rejoice that we have possessed him as he was. We rejoice that we possess him still in the undying union of spirit with spirit, and that the eye of faith beholds him in a happier world where, the Hardships of the Way forgotten, "the spirits of just men made perfect," are gathered, and do "shine forth and are as the morning."

FOLKESTONE,

All Saints' Day.

1st November, 1916.

THE EMPTY CHAIR.

Wherever is an empty chair—

Lord, be Thou there !

And fill it—like an answered prayer—

With grace of fragrant thought, and rare

Sweet memories of him whose place

Thou takest for a little space !

With thought of that heroical

Great heart that sprang to Duty's call ;

With thought of all the best in him,

That Time shall have no power to dim ;

With thought of Duty nobly done,

And High Eternal Welfare won.

Think ! Would you wish that he had stayed,

When all the rest The Call obeyed ?

That thought of self had held in thrall

His soul, and shrunk it mean and small ?

Nay, rather thank the Lord that he

Rose to such height of chivalry ;

That, with the need, his loyal soul

Swung like a needle to its pole ;

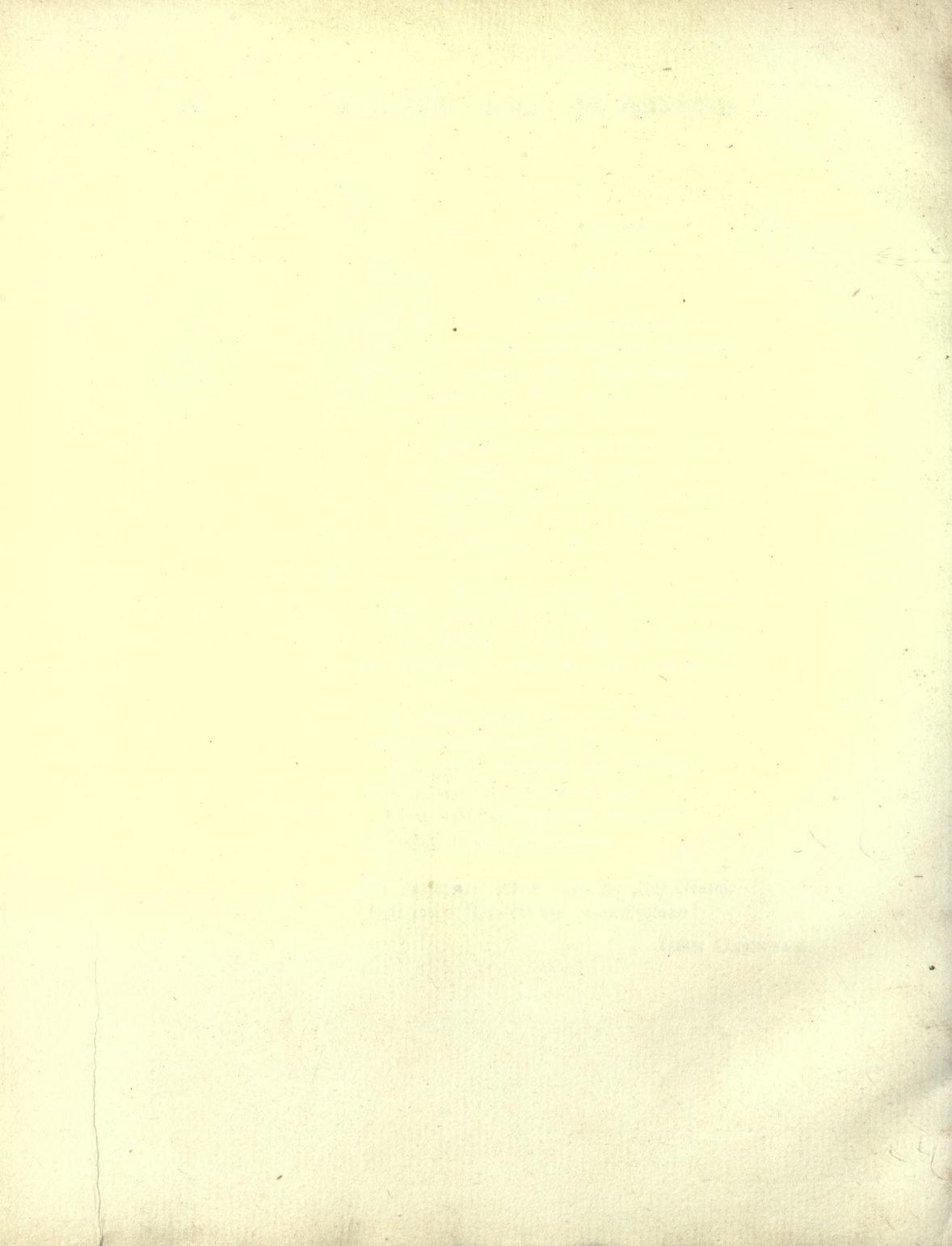
That, setting duty first, he went

At once as to a sacrament.

So, Lord, we thank Thee for Thy Grace,

And pray Thee fill his vacant place !

JOHN OXENHAM.



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